Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled)

Claim 17. (Original): A device for pressure-conditioning material for food and/or semi-luxury consumables, comprising: a hyperbarically pressurized conditioning chamber, into which the material is introduced through an entrance; supply nozzles for treating the material with a conditioning agent; and an exit for extracting the material from said conditioning chamber, wherein the conditioning chamber is arranged obliquely inclined upwards and comprises a mixing conveyor by means of which the material is conveyed continuously from said entrance to said exit.

Claim 18. (Currently Amended): The device as set forth in ~~the preceding claim~~ claim 17, wherein said food and/or semi-luxury consumables are comminuted tobacco material.

Claim 19. (Currently Amended): The device as set forth in ~~the preceding claim~~ claim 17, wherein said comminuted tobacco material is tobacco stem material.

Claim 20. (Original): The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein said mixing conveyor comprises a conveying screw.

Claim 21. (Original): The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein the entrance and the exit are configured as pressure differential proof cellular wheel sluices and the conditioning chamber is configured as a pressure proof chamber.

Claim 22. (Original): The device as set forth in claim 21, wherein said cellular wheel sluices and the chamber are pressure proof up to a pressure burden of at least 11 bars.

Claim 23. (Original): The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein the inclination of the conditioning chamber is variable.

Claim 24. (Currently Amended): The device as set forth in ~~the preceding claim~~ claim 17, wherein the inclination of the conditioning chamber is variable in the range >0° to 45°.

Claim 25. (Original): The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein said conveying screw exhibits a progressive pitch.

Claim 26. (Original): The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein speed of the conveying screw is variable.

Claim 27. (Original): The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein the flanks of the conveying screw comprise cavities through which the material can fall back.

Claims 28-36 (Canceled)

Claim 37. (New): An apparatus for conditioning of tobacco material, comprising:

a hyperbaric pressure chamber having an entrance and an exit;

a screw conveyor positioned within said hyperbaric pressure chamber and between said entrance and said exit;

a first pressure differential sluice positioned adjacent said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

a second pressure differential sluice positioned adjacent said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

wherein said chamber is upwardly inclined at an angle of greater than 0° and less than about 45°.

Claim 38. (New): The apparatus for conditioning tobacco material of Claim 37 wherein said screw conveyor has cavities for material to fall backwards.

Claim 39. (New): The apparatus for conditioning of tobacco material of Claim 37 wherein said screw conveyor has a progressive pitch in the direction of said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber.

Claim 40. (New): The apparatus for conditioning of tobacco of Claim 37 further comprising a first feed shoe at said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber, said first feed shoe in flow communication with a steam leakage channel.

Claim 41. (New): The apparatus for conditioning tobacco of Claim 40 further comprising a second feed shoe at said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber, said second feed shoe in flow communication with a steam extraction hood.

Claim 42. (New): The apparatus for conditioning of tobacco of Claim 37 wherein said screw conveyor is a variable speed conveying screw.

Claim 43. (New): The apparatus for conditioning of tobacco of Claim 37 further comprising a conveyance mechanism positioned below said second pressure differential sluice.

Claim 44. (New): An apparatus for pre-conditioning of tobacco material, comprising:

a hyperbaric pressure chamber having an entrance at a first and an exit at a second raised

end;

a conveyance screw interior to said hyperbaric pressure chamber having a progressive pitch in a direction of said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

wherein said hyperbaric pressure chamber is arranged obliquely inclined upwards towards said exit;

a rotary air lock positioned at said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a feed shoe;

a second rotary air lock positioned at said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a discharge shoe;

wherein said pressure chamber may be positioned at an upward angle of about 1° to about 45°.

Claim 45. (New): The apparatus of Claim 44, wherein said conveyance screw of said hyperbaric pressure chamber has a plurality of cavities on surfaces of said conveyance screw.

Claim 46. (New): The apparatus of Claim 44, wherein said conveyance screw has a progressive pitch towards said exit.

Claim 47. (New): The apparatus of Claim 44, wherein said chamber has a bell valve at a lower section near said entrance.

Claim 48. (New): The apparatus of Claim 44, further comprising a main steam leakage flow channel in full communication with said feed shoe at said first rotary air lock.

Claim 49. (New): An apparatus for pre-conditioning of tobacco material, comprising:

a conditioning chamber arranged obliquely inclined upwards from an entrance to an exit, said entrance lower than said exit;

a mixing conveyor contained within said conditioning chamber;

a first pressure differential sluice at said entrance;

a second pressure differential sluice at said exit;

wherein said inclination of said conditioning chamber is a continuously variable inclination of between greater than 0° and 45°;

a plurality of nozzles within said conditioning chamber in flow communication with a steam source.

Claim 50. (New): An apparatus for conditioning tobacco, comprising:

a hyperbaric pressure chamber having an entrance at a first lower end and a exit at a second higher end;

a conveyance screw within said hyperbaric pressure chamber having a progressive pitch in the direction of said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

a pressure differential sluice placed at said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a feed shoe;

a tobacco material supply shaft entering into said feed shoe;

a discharge pressurized wheel sluice at said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a discharge shoe, said discharge shoe entering into an extraction hood;

a temperature adjustment mechanism at said sluice of said entrance of said chamber.